Clinical Health Assessment and Promotion Program Pilot for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities in Las Vegas, Nevada

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Background

Within the disability population, a subpopulation of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (ID/DD) appears to experience obstacles to health care to a greater degree.¹

- They receive lower rates of preventative care.
- They receive under-diagnosis of chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Hypothesis

- The local population of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities in Las Vegas, NV face these **four main barriers** to health care\(^2\):
  - Access
  - Knowledge
  - Communication
  - Quality

- These barriers provide obstacles to attaining their full health potential.\(^2\)

Methods

- Family Quality of Life Survey completed by 9 families of persons served by Opportunity Village (OV).
  - OV is a non-profit organization that provides occupational services for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

- The surveys were conducted in person by Fairuz Despujos, Husna Najand, and Evelyn Ochoa, under the auspices of Dr. Kate Martin, with the UNSOM Department of Family and Community Medicine in Las Vegas.

- The information was entered into a database and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software.
Results

- A wide range of medical diagnoses were associated with the individuals discussed in the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Conditions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart Murmur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiatal Hernia</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Blood Pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Cholesterol/High Triglycerides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothyroidism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seasonal Allergies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep Apnea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type II Diabetes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urologic Condition (Vesicourethral Reflux)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision Problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overweight/Obesity</td>
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Barriers to Health Care: Access

Comments:

- Long wait for service
- Not knowing where to go for health care services
- Being unable to tolerate long wait times for a sedation dentist
- Problems with health insurance, such as non-coverage of Medicaid services
- “Nutritional services, dental access – it’s difficult to go to a children’s dentist”
Barriers to Health Care: Knowledge

- Nearly all survey participants (89%) reported utilization of special disability benefits.
- Only 56% stated that they used service coordination, such as social work.
- 67% of family members reported not getting services that they needed.
- 22% stated that services were not available in the area.
Barriers to Health Care: Communication

- With regard to communicating needs, this varied greatly, from “very little meaningful communication” to “communication within a limited range of topics in a meaningful way”
Barriers to Health Care: Communication

- Poor treatment by health care professionals
- “Dentists and general practitioners don’t have time to serve mentally disabled patients”
- Disagreements with doctors on treatment protocols, such as medication recommendations
Barriers to Health Care: Quality of Care

- “It’s hard to find medical doctors who take Medicaid. [Individual] lost his family doctor due to this.”

- “Some services are not covered by insurance or Medicaid.”

- “There are only two dentists who accept kids and we are down to one due to poor treatment.”
Barriers to Health Care: Quality of Life

- Everyone rated the health of the family as “very important,” the highest possible category.

- 67% voiced concerns about the health of other family members, and made suggestions for services and programs that could improve their family quality of life.
Barriers to Health Care: Quality of Life

- Reported concerns in regard to family quality of life:
  - “We need help with nutrition. We eat too many carbs.”
  - “Working full-time, being a single parent, I cannot access a lot of exercise facilities.”
  - “We wish... that Las Vegas had more opportunities to engage in physical and social activities, such as sports – and not just dances [held monthly, at OV].”
  - “It is difficult to continuously find activities that are mutually rewarding for both individuals, with and without special needs.”
4 Main Barriers to Health Care

- Access
- Knowledge
- Communication
- Quality

Importance of Support from Developmental Disability Related Services

- Somewhat important: 11.11%
- Quite important: 33.33%
- Very important: 55.56%
“I am very grateful for the benefits of Opportunity Village. My son has matured and transitioned from a non-confident boy to a confident young man.”
Specific Requests

- Nutrition education
- Physical activities
- Better access to dental care
- Behavioral counseling for individuals
Next Steps – Part I

- Development of a monthly health promotion program for individuals served and their families.
  - Incorporates principles of nutrition, physical activity, mental health/well-being, and dental health.
  - Collaboration with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas pre-health professional students and the University of Nevada School of Medicine.
    - Internship programs to help design and deliver the sessions.
    - First sessions will take place in March on the topic of physical activity.
Next Steps – Part II

- A longitudinal curriculum in care considerations for those with intellectual disabilities has been submitted to the Residency Review Committee for Family Medicine. It is currently pending publication in an online peer-reviewed curriculum resource for all family medicine residency programs.
Thank You For Your Time and Consideration